

Grafton Township

Grafton township occupies the northwest corner of Fillmore County. It is bounded on the north by York County, on the east and south by West Blue and Bennett townships, and on the west by Clay County. The West Blue River crosses the northeastern corner of the township, and School Creek flows from near the southeastern corner to near the northeastern, emptying into the Blue near the York County line. The Chicago-Denver line of the Burlington R.R. crosses the southern end of the township from east to west, about a mile from its southern border, closely paralleled by U.S. 6. The Lushton-Clay Center branch of the Burlington crosses from northeast to southwest, through Secs. 2 to 30, following closely the course of School Creek. Despite a reasonable amount of ground water, by the end of 1966, Grafton township had 57 irrigation wells, with more in prospect.

School Creek and the West Blue had, in the early days, a constant flow of water and were well wooded. Naturally, the first claims were taken along the north end of the township so that the settlers could be sure of water and fuel. A few log houses were built. Those who located out on the prairie had to build sod houses, which were comfortable but hard to keep clean. The settlers found that some of the soil could be baked into brick, and some of them used brick walls and thatched roofs for their homes, but the brick was not too solid and the thatch often leaked. Wells were the real problems; digging a well with a spade was a hard job.

Grafton township was settled by immigrants from Illinois, Ohio, Missouri, New York, Delaware, West Virginia, and New England, who were looking for new homes after the Civil War. These people were mostly Anglo-Saxon, though among them were a number of Germans and Irish. Some took up homesteads, while others bought railroad land. The Burlington Railroad was built through the county in 1871. This made life much easier for the pioneers, who before its coming had hauled their provisions and supplies overland; the nearest town was Lincoln.

One of the first homesteads was taken in 1869 by the Shroyers, who came here from West Virginia. There were three brothers—David John, Jake and Andy Shroyer—with their mother and their two sisters, Mary and Vina. Other names familiar to early homesteaders were Elisha Littlefield, Joseph Tatro, Wallace Fairbanks, Scott Mattern, Joseph Frazier (Lou's father), Tom and John Watt, the Lytle brothers, O. H. Parsons, George Wintersteen, Erskine Clark, Jasper Culver, Joseph Le Hew, Silas Pringle, and Xerxes Stevens.

The lives of the pioneers were not too dull. They visited their neighbors, often driving a yoke of oxen to do so. A few had ponies. If they were driving past a house near mealtime, they stopped to eat and were welcome. Dances, spelling bees, and quilting bees furnished entertainment. Prairie fires were



Photo from Walt Thomas
Crowd at ball game between the Married Men and Bachelors (1911).

a terror to the settlers. Some were started (as nowadays) by carelessness, some by guns, some by sparks from locomotives. They were hard to control and did a great deal of damage.

Building up a home from scratch and organizing townships and counties was a mighty task, but these people undertook the job and finished it. The land had to be surveyed. Corner stones were buried, one mile apart, at all section corners. Many of these can still be found and are used as basic evidence for settling boundary lines. In the late 1880's a band of German-Russians moved into the northwest corner of Grafton township, and their descendants are still there.

Grafton township has seen four towns started. The first was Fillmore, located on Sec. 1, the NE section of the township. It had a store, a blacksmith shop, and one house. Grafton was first platted out for a town just five miles west of its present location in the year 1871, immediately after the laying of the Burlington railroad. It consisted of one store, a post office, and four small houses erected by the railroad company. Here it remained until 1875, when it was moved to its present location and Captain Patrick S. Real opened a store one



Photo from Jim O'Brien
W. G. Hainey's General Merchandise Store in Grafton (1902). Boy on walk, Georgie Brady; on porch, Miles Longman, W. G. Hainey, Sr., Pat Brady. The little girl in the cart is Ruth, daughter of George Hainey.



Dog races, 1890

Photo from Leo Schaf

block south of the present city light-plant building. This store was later sold to W. G. Hainey, who moved it nearer to the railroad. Here it remained and did business as long as there was a Hainey in Grafton—more than 65 years.

Grafton was a lively little town in the 80's. It had three dry-goods stores, two restaurants, a newspaper (the *Grafton Leader*), two livery barns, a resident doctor, a lawyer who had a boy in his office studying law, a drugstore, two hotels, and a post office. Among the familiar names of that date were W. G. Hainey, George Hainey, H. J. Day, E. A. Cushing, Dr. Charles Ballard, O. J. Lytle, John Conness, Dr. Johnson, E. H. S. James, B. J. La Shalle, P. T. Tales, George Wintersteen, Elizabeth Stevens, E. F. Hinkley, George Warren, Bob Price, Captain P. S. Real, J. B. Hitchcock, John Menzie, Mrs. Keeler, A. Spandau, John Fitzgerald, Dennis & Roland, Tom Fisher, Emmet Real, A. McNickle, John Burke, John Shoff, Dan Easten, John Kalbin, and John Kahn. John Shoff was the first postmaster (appointed in 1873).

The last town to be started was Lyman; but when it was found that another town in the state had the same name, it was changed to Bixby. Bixby was on the Kansas City & Omaha R.R. (later part of the Burlington system) which crossed the northwestern corner of the township. It had a large elevator, a good stockyard, one store, and one house. It did good business for a while, but it was too close to three other towns and faded out.

In early days grist mills were common. Three dams were built on the West Blue, and each one operated a mill. The Fillmore Mill was built on the site of the old town. Seeley's Mill was across the line in York County. The Farmer's Valley Mill was a little farther west. At that time, farmers took their grain to the mills, where, for a commission, the miller ground it and gave back flour and meal. A Mr. Ellis, John Welch, Bill Smith, and Les Frederick were millers at Fillmore.

—Ellen Fitzgerald

Grafton

The history of the present town of Grafton begins in 1874.¹ Except for the name, the present town has little or no connection with the town of that name which figured so prominently in the early history of Sutton. More appropriately, it could be said to be an extension or relocation of Fillmore City, the first town in the county.

When the Burlington Railroad, in 1871, changed its projected course through southern York County to its present location it apparently sounded the death knell of Fillmore City, and there was soon little left of the town. In 1872, however, C. M. Northrup located there and prepared to build



Photo from Mrs. James C. Wroughton
East side of Main Street (Washington Ave.)—early 1900's

¹This account of the village of Grafton was written by Mrs. Lee Parsons.



Photo from James O'Brien
Main Street (1918), looking south from Grafton State Bank building on corner of Manchester St. and Washington Ave.

a mill. Together, he and E. L. Martin laid out a town that was to be a bigger and better Fillmore City. To the original town site, which constituted the W ½ of the NW ¼ of Sec. 6, T8, R3W, in West Blue precinct, was now added the E ½ of the NE ¼ of Sec. 1, T8, R4W in Grafton township. The township line was to be the main street. The whole was surveyed, platted, and filed in the county clerk's office as a town site on December 10, 1872. Work on the mill was completed in 1873, and the production of flour was begun. The mill was well built, with four runs of burrs, and ground a good grade of flour. Despite a great demand for the mill's products, Fillmore City never grew to be a town, undoubtedly because of its lack of a railroad.

For a time, Mr. Northrup hauled his flour by team and wagon to Fairmont, the nearest shipping point on the Burlington, but this proved unsatisfactory, as the round trip added up to 22 miles. Captain P. S. Real, who had come from Illinois with his wife and family in 1872, was a friend and neighbor of Mr. Northrup. He was a personal friend of John Fitzgerald, the famous railroad builder. Thanks to his influence, the B. & M. built a siding at a point four miles south of the mill, where Mr. Northrup thereafter loaded his flour. Soon the farmers in that locality were bringing their wheat there to sell or to exchange for flour, and Mr. Northrup built a small warehouse. This made it a convenient place for the farmers to get their mail, and so, in 1873, a post office was established in the near-by home of John Schaff, with Mrs. Schaff as postmistress.

This made Northrup's siding seem a good place for a town; and so, when, on March 27, 1874, at the request of the proprietors, the county commissioners declared the town site of Grafton, near Sutton, vacated, another town with the same name was laid out here on the farm of Joseph Tatro. Mr. Tatro, at the suggestion of Mr. Real and through Mr. Real's influence with the railroad, had previously entered into a contract to donate a share of the lots to the railroad in exchange for a depot to be built there. This town site, which consisted of about 60 acres in the SE ¼ of Sec. 25, T8, R4W, was surveyed in April, 1874, by A. B. Smith. The plat was filed on June 11, and on July 1, 1874, a share of the lots was transferred to the township committee. The town did not begin to grow, however, until 1875, when a depot was built.

The first actual business house in Grafton was a flour and grain warehouse and office built by Mr. Northrup in 1875. In the same year P. S. Real bought the first grain. Later he built and kept the first lumber yard and established a store. Among those who established businesses was W. G. Hainey, an experienced dealer in general merchandise, who, on October 1, 1875, took over the store started by Mr. Real, with a stock worth \$6,000. This became one of the most progressive stores in the county.

By the fall of 1876, the population numbered about 50, and Grafton was fast becoming an important grain market and trade center. The town grew steadily, although slowly, until



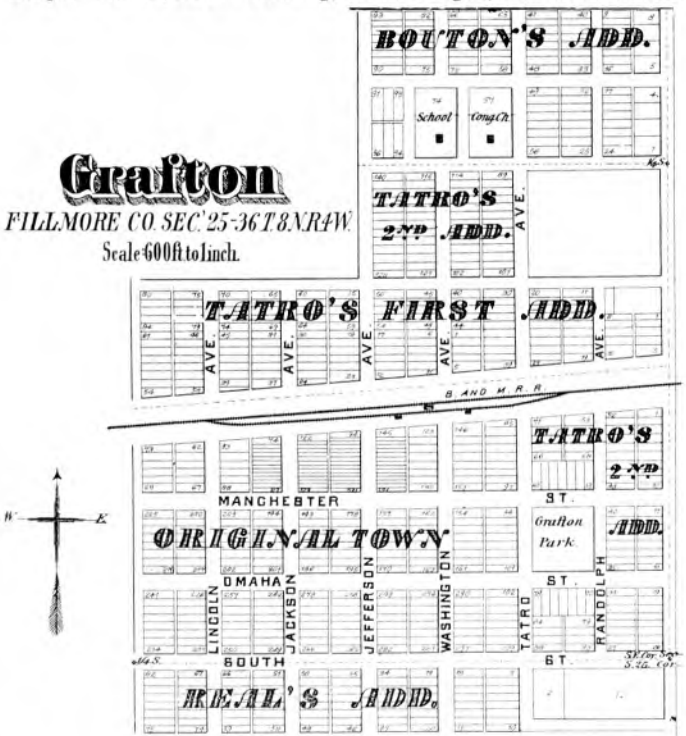
Photo from Walt Thomas
Old Grafton depot with elevators in background (looking southwest)

the spring of 1879, when a new wave of settlers moved into the county and a number of business and professional men located here. Among these were A. C. Spandau, who opened the first drugstore in 1878; Dr. Charles F. Ballard, the first physician; and Arthur Murdock, who opened a lumber yard. H. J. Day opened a general store with a stock of \$6,000 and later built the town hall and the Palace Hotel.

In 1880, George H. Warren erected a new steam elevator with a capacity of 20,000 bushels and did a heavy trade in grain and seeds. For many years thereafter, Grafton was one of the best grain markets on the Burlington. R. J. Blackburn began the livery business.

In 1881, the Bank of Grafton was organized, with J. O. Chase of the Fillmore County Bank, "one of the ablest financiers in Nebraska," as president. R. C. Price, "an accomplished young businessman who represented wealthy Eastern shareholders," was cashier. The directors were W. G. Hainey, J. O. Chase, and J. W. Price. Mr. Chase later founded the famous Chase National Bank in New York.

Grafton became incorporated as a village on March 3, 1882. The board of trustees consisted of Arthur Murdock, Jasper Culver, E. A. Cushing, C. C. Wright, and T. E. Moon.



Official State Atlas of Nebraska
Map of Grafton in 1885

About this time the *Hand-Book of Fillmore County* (1884) gave this account of Grafton:

Seven miles west of Fairmont, on the B. & M. railway and in one of the garden spots of the country, is Grafton, a bright and

growing town of 500 people. It has a beautiful and commanding location, an elegant schoolhouse, three churches, a solid bank, three elevators with a storage capacity of 100,000 bushels, two fine new hotels, a new and enterprising journal—the *Leader*—edited and published by D. D. Crane, a heavy shipping trade in grain and livestock, a large general trade, some live and enterprising businessmen, and a good showing of pretty, tasteful homes.

Needless to add that the most important contributing factor to all of this is the fact that it is surrounded by a rich agricultural region in which intelligent and energetic farmers are carrying on a broad program of farming and livestock raising.

Early Businessmen

Among the first owners of general-merchandise stores in Grafton were H. J. Day and E. A. Cushing. Mr. Day moved to Grafton in 1879 and began business as a dealer in groceries and dry goods. He built a spacious home with a circular staircase and a turret, which for many years was the most elegant residence in the community. Some years later he sold his store to Mr. O'Donnell. In 1912, this store was being run by C. A. Rossman when the building and much of the merchandise were destroyed by fire. Mr. Day also built the town hall and the Palace Hotel, which many years later was torn down and rebuilt on the same location to house Jake Walters' machine shop.

Another store was being operated in 1879 under the name of Cushing Brothers; a few years later, E. A. Cushing was listed as the owner. In 1904, this store was taken over by Frank Mecham in partnership with J. C. Cox, an Exeter merchant. After the fire of March 10, 1912, which destroyed most of the businesses on the west side of Grafton's main street, he and Mr. Cox built a large brick building to house their stock (which had been only slightly damaged). Mr. Mecham continued in the mercantile business until his retirement in 1946.



Photo from Ernest Kleinschmidt
Mecham's Store after fire on March 10, 1912. Left to right: Frank Mecham, Frances Muller, Carl Eller.

The first grocery and dry-goods store in Grafton was, as noted earlier, opened by Captain P. S. Real. It was taken over in 1875 by W. G. Hainey and moved to a new location. This business remained in the Hainey family until 1940, when the stock was liquidated and the building torn down.

It is not known whether these persons were the first to follow their particular business or profession in Grafton, but in 1879 these names were in the business directory: Edward Brophy, hardware store; F. F. Combs, meat market; N. J. Shenck, proprietor Cooper House (hotel); D. Easton, blacksmith; C. H. Eggleston, attorney-at-law; H. C. Johnston, agricultural implements; J. W. Price, grain and coal; and J. M. Spandau, drugs, paints, books, etc.

In 1882, Dr. Charles Ballard set up practice in Grafton, and R. J. Blackburn established a livery stable. The *Grafton Gazette* was being published by H. C. Hensel, and Mrs. C. A. Richards opened another hotel, the Grafton House. There were two other attorneys, George H. Ryman and T. B. Tolls. Dr. John W. Archard set up his practice in 1894 and continued in it until 1907 or 1908. He was followed by Dr. Grey, and later Dr. Sweeney practiced for some years. In 1915, Dr. C. S. Hubbard began a practice which he continued until his death,



Photo from Walt Thomas
Grafton Main Street (Washington Ave.), about 1915, looking north from corner of Omaha St.



Photo from Walt Thomas
Grafton Main Street about 1930, looking north from corner of Omaha St. and Washington Ave.



Photo from Mrs. James Wroughton
The James Store in 1899. Left to right: E. H. S. James, Ruth James, William Basserman.

except for an eight-year period during which he practiced elsewhere. During this interval, Dr. Archard returned to Grafton for a short time, and several other doctors, including Dr. Bayles and Dr. Sterling also practiced. In 1931, Dr. Hubbard retired, but remained in Grafton until his death in 1940. He was Grafton's last resident doctor.

E. H. S. James came to Grafton in 1889 and opened a drugstore which he operated until his death in 1934. This was the last drugstore in Grafton. Walter Thomas, Grafton's barber, set up his business on the east side of the street after the fire destroyed his original shop. In 1912, Brown Brothers of Sutton built a brick building south of the Mecham store, which has housed a restaurant and pool hall until recently. Sadie and Bert Willy were the first operators of these businesses in the new building. It now (1967) houses Keller's Bar.

Grafton has had three major fires. The first, some time before 1900, burned George Warren's elevator. On March 10, 1912, a fire burned out at least five business places on the west side of the street: Frank Conrad's meat market, the pool hall operated by Tony Green, the post office, Walter Thomas's barber shop, and the C. A. Rossman general store. A



Photos from Ernest Kleinschmidt (left) and Walt Thomas (right)
After the fire on Oct. 16, 1929—Mecham's store on left, ruins of bank building on right.

Civil War cannon which had been donated to the town by Congressman Charles H. Sloan, and which was stored in the pool hall, was destroyed. The third fire, on October 16, 1929, destroyed the bank building, a restaurant, and a meat market. Frank Mecham's store was damaged by the two-story brick wall of the bank which toppled over on it.

Two dreadful accidents have happened on Main Street where it crosses the railroad. The first was in the summer of 1891, when Nebraska was being visited by very heavy rains. The Union Pacific tracks along the Platte River had been washed out; the company asked for the privilege of running some of its fast trains over the Burlington line, and this was granted. On the afternoon of June 26, a fast U.P. train was going west just ahead of our local afternoon train. Maria H. (Mrs. Joseph) Tatro was to take the afternoon local, and Grace L. (Mrs. George) Hainey was walking with her to the station. They heard the whistle and started to hurry. Just as they reached the track, Mrs. Tatro stumbled. Mrs. Hainey reached to help her, and both were run over by the U.P. train. Mrs. Hainey's little boy was running along behind, but someone stopped him.

The other accident happened at the same place, many years later, on August 8, 1920. Jim Colman was bringing his mother home from morning church when a fast train was going through town. Jim didn't see the train; their car was struck, and both were killed.

Schools

The village of Grafton has maintained good schools through the years. There have been three buildings. The first was a one-room schoolhouse on the east side of town. The second was a two-story building, with three rooms on each floor. This was finally outgrown, and the present brick building was erected in 1914. The first graduating class was that of 1885. Over the years, Grafton graduates have entered many walks of life and are widely scattered over the United States. The townspeople were the kind that thought first of their churches and their schools; and any project started by the school always brought out a good crowd and received the support of the community.



Photo from Grace Shroyer
The second school building constructed in District 16.



Photo from Lee Parsons
Grafton Public School (District 16), erected in 1914. The high school was closed at the end of the school term in May, 1956, and it reverted to a Class I school. As of 1967, it was classified as a Class I school with 5 teachers and an enrollment of 80 pupils.



Photo from Walt Thomas
Grafton High School Glee Club in 1914. Left to right: Faye Hawkins, Marie Cushing, Margaret McKeon, Mary Mueller, Elsie Schalenberg, Ethel Blaesi, Ruth Hainey, Marie Finnegan, Nellie Halligan, Claire Hawkins, Marie Olexa, Mildred Sharkey, Hildegard Bauer, Esther Kahm, Laverna Finnegan.



Photo from Leo Schaf
Grafton High School Band led by Prof. Baker in 1912-1913. Left to right: John McKeon, Tom Mueller, Clay Whitcomb, Gordon Miles, Andrew Schaf, Bert Frederick, Clarice Kahm, John Keenan, Tim Hoarty, Tom Finnegan, unidentified boy, Leo Schaf, unidentified boy, Albert Radford, Kenneth Cushing, Frank Hainey. Note James drugstore at right of picture and Hotel in background, center.

Churches

St. Helena's Church (Catholic)

Back in the late 70's, the early pioneers blazed the way and arrived in the vicinity of Grafton, 60 miles west of Lincoln on the Burlington R.R., only to find that churches were a luxury out here, and as such were few and far apart.

Some of the early settlers were Schroers, Schafs, McDonalds, Reals, Schmitzes, Russells, O'Briens, Zierens, Kellers, Weisenborns, Donovans, Stahls, Rolfes, Ryans, Schencks, and Fitzgeralds.

Catholic services were held for some time in the railway section-house home of George Schroer, north and west of the Wilson elevator. This good family spared no pains to make visiting priests and fellow Catholics at home in their temporary house of worship. Later the hospitable home of Patrick S. Real, Sr., was placed at the disposal of priests and worshipers to serve their religious needs.

Services were held twice a month until the building of the first Catholic church in Grafton (which was also the first church erected in the township), completed in the late spring of 1880. This was a major undertaking and meant great sacrifices to provide a suitable church for a growing congregation. Many memories still cling about the old church that in those days was a Christian landmark on the plains.



Photo from Leo Schaf
St. Helena's Catholic Church, 1922, (photo from Mrs. Frank Rolfes) (inset) shows first Catholic Church, erected in 1880.

The present church grounds—comprising Lots 270, 271, 272, and 273, Block 23—were donated to the church by Patrick S. Real, Sr. The south half of the cemetery grounds of 2½ acres was also donated by Mr. Real.

There was no resident priest in charge until the spring of 1885. During those first years several priests, including Fathers Ambler, Jennett, and Lecklughtner, came from Exeter to hold services.

Late in 1884, efforts were made to establish a rectory in order to secure a resident priest. This building was completed in the spring of 1885. Father William Murphy was the first resident priest. He was followed, in 1887, by Father J. E. English. Nine months later came Father Thomas Corcoran, who was here for 10 years. During his pastorate all the debts contracted in the building of the church and rectory were paid in full.

In August, 1897, the Rev. D. G. Fitzgerald took charge. He built an addition to the church, which improved its appearance and provided better accommodations for its increased membership.

Father J. W. Loughnot next held the pastorate, beginning in the spring of 1906, for nine months. In January, 1907, came Father William McKenna, who served until 1911. In his time here, he had modern conveniences placed in the old house. His health failed, and he was forced to seek a change. For the next few months, the pastor in charge was Father E.

F. Fitzpatrick, who was a college teacher; finding pastoral work not to his liking, he shortly returned to his college chair.

Father Patrick J. Healy was appointed May 11, 1911. As the 40-year-old frame buildings were showing wear and tear, he took steps to erect a modern two-story rectory. Started in the fall of 1912, this was completed in March, 1913, at a cost of \$5,000. The architect was C. W. May of Hastings, and L. V. Peterson of southwest Grafton was the contractor. The chairman of the building committee was Father Healy; the treasurer was James F. Burke; and the other members of the committee were John W. Fennell, John O'Brien, Sr., John Merten, Joseph Bauer, and Tom Fitzgerald.

On May 21, 1916, at a general meeting of members, the pastor proposed starting a building fund toward erection of a new church. After earnest discussion, the matter was under way. Between that date and 1922, the fund was increased not only by direct subscriptions but also by the profits realized by the good ladies of St. Helena's from their bazaars, which were patronized not only by church members but also by members of the community at large.

By 1922, the fund had reached \$18,000, and it was time to get direct subscriptions to see the project through. The building committee—the pastor, Tom Fitzgerald, and J. F. Stahl—secured plans and specifications for a new church. Leo Daly of Omaha was the architect and Edward R. Green of Hastings was the builder.

The old church had to be moved to make way for the new one, and the contractor took it over for \$400. The last Sunday Mass in the old church was held on November 19, 1922.

Some suitable place had to be found to hold services during construction, and Paul E. Hainey kindly donated the use of the Opera House. Here church services were held until September 10, 1923. Pews from the old church were used, so that the members felt right at home in the Opera church. The situation provided a kind of echo of early church pioneering in Nebraska.

Later priests at St. Helena's included Fathers Anthony Lutz, Edward Hagan, Henry J. Denis, Thomas Kadlas, and Thomas Cain.

The present church is an attractive addition to the village of Grafton, besides being, more importantly, a source of spiritual help to its members, a temple in some small way worthy as God's House of Prayer. —Mrs. Frank Rolfes

Grafton Congregational Church

The earliest records of Congregationalism in Grafton show that it began here in the 1870's. In 1877, pastors Warren Cochran of Fairmont and the Rev. G. S. Harrison of York held church services here during the year. On February 21, 1878, an organizational meeting was held in Tatros's Hall, with 55 persons present, with the Rev. W. S. Wills of Seely Congregational Church as acting moderator. Officers elected were Chester Ward and Augustus Ambler, deacons; R. S. Cooley, clerk; and C. C. Miles, treasurer. A building committee was also appointed, but plans to build a church were abandoned until later.

In January, 1882, it was voted to accept one acre of ground east of the schoolhouse, donated by C. B. Banton of Chicago. The church edifice was completed in 1883. Before this time, church services were held part time in Tatros's Hall and part time in the Methodist Church. Among early members were the Stuckeys, Haineys, Waggoners, Amblers, Tatros, Mileses, Carneys, Bossermans, Burts, Shoffs, McCashlands, Murdocks, Wards, Menzies, Cooleys, Combses, Dr. Ballard, and others.

The Rev. William S. Wills was the first regular minister, followed by the Rev. A. Dean. The Rev. John B. Doolittle served six years and during his time built a parsonage. This was later sold to the Dean Stuckey family as a residence. The Revs. Joseph Herbert, E. H. Baker, John Andreas, A. A. Cressman, and C. L. Hammond all served before 1900.

In 1879, a ladies' society was first mentioned in the church records. It was known as the "Ladies' Congregational Mite Society." There is still an active ladies' group, known



Photo from Leo Schaf
Grafton Congregational Church, erected in 1883.

nowadays as the "Women's Fellowship."

In 1904, during the ministry of Mr. Hammond, the church building was moved from the north end to its present location in the south part of town. During the early 1900's, some of the ministers serving the church were the Revs. Harry Triplett, T. J. Brown, H. M. Skeels, Samuel Unger, James Deans, and Julius Kraemer. The Rev. Thomas Brown was the first pastor to live in the new parsonage, which had been built by the Ladies' Aid. The parsonage is still owned by the church but is now rented to private families.

The Rev. James Deans of Antioch was with the church for two years. During his stay, the congregation, through the Ladies' Aid Society, in 1921 bought the unused Methodist church building across the street. It was given the name of Plymouth Hall and made into a place for church-related activities and recreation.

The Rev. Julius Kraemer of Clarks followed the Rev. Mr. Deans. During his five years here, both the church building and Plymouth Hall were remodeled, improving both their appearance and usefulness. The Rev. Alfred Robertson followed Mr. Kraemer for one year. In 1929, the church celebrated its 50th anniversary, the minister at that time being the Rev. Howard Pyche. Many former pastors and members were present.

The period of the 1930's represented "hard times" for churches as well as for families. The Revs. Howard Lacy, John Craig, and Jesse Pruitt served as resident ministers during the depression years. Following them, the Rev. W. W. Wright, minister of the Federated Church of Sutton, served the church for four years. During this time he held services in Grafton at an early hour before returning to Sutton for his regular services in the Federated Church.

The coming of Alexander Fales, of Rhode Island, a student at Doane College, was the beginning of a series of student pastors who served the church. The Rev. Mr. Fales had come to Doane College for his health, and served as resident minister for one year and one summer. He was followed during the next five years by several students supplied by Doane College. The Rev. Frederick Leavitt of Crete was the last resident minister, serving for three years. The Rev. W. C. Brewer, a retired Presbyterian minister of York, served one year.

In the summer of 1952, the Rev. Maude V. Mann began her 12 years of service with us. She was an Evangelical United Brethren minister who also served her E.U.B. church in Lushton at the same time as her service in the Grafton Congregational Church. In September, 1964, ill health forced her to discontinue her work here. During her ministry, both the church and Plymouth Hall were extensively remodeled and redecoreated.

Miss Mann was followed by the Rev. George Bartell, minister of the United Church of Christ in Sutton, who assumed the duties here in addition to those of his own church. He came faithfully for more than a year, holding services here at 8:30 A.M., until failing health made it imperative that he give up the church in Grafton.

For a time we again turned to Doane College to supply our needs. At present we share a minister with the Fairmont United Church of Christ—the Rev. William Reitmeier.

—Mrs. Lloyd Kleinschmidt

Grafton Methodist Church

Late in the 1870's, a Rev. Mr. Chapin came to Grafton and held some special meetings, which resulted in the conversion of 40 people. It was then decided to organize and build a Methodist church; their building was completed in the early 1880's. About 1910, however, the Methodist organization was disbanded because many of its members had moved away. The old Methodist church structure was bought in 1921 by the Congregational Ladies' Aid Society, and it was remodeled into the present Plymouth Hall.



Photo from Grace Shroyer
Grafton Methodist Church, about 1916.

Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church

In the mid-1920's a group of Lutherans in and around Grafton, desiring to be served, called upon the Rev. J. Witt, president of the Nebraska District of the Wisconsin Synod, to ask that a pastor be placed in their midst.

The first service was conducted by the Rev. H. Kuckhahn of Geneva on Christmas Day, 1927. Thereafter the parishioners were served by Lutheran pastors of the Nebraska District.



Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, 1928.

On April 18, 1928, with the guidance of the Revs. F. Brenner and W. J. Schaefer, the following charter members organized and were elected into office: Harry Lentfer, president; Jacob Baumann, secretary and trustee; John Everts, treasurer; Edward Baumann and Sam Oberlander, trustees.

On May 22, 1928, this group decided to erect Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church in the village of Grafton. A call was sent out to, and accepted by, the Rev. W. A. Krenke of McIntosh, South Dakota. He was installed on August 5, 1928, as the first pastor. After his installation, more members joined the church.

On November 25, 1928, seven months after its organization, the Trinity congregation of Grafton was privileged, by the grace of God, to dedicate its new church edifice. "God's word shall not return unto Him void, but shall accomplish that which He pleaseth, and shall prosper in the thing whereto He sent it." (Isaiah 55:11.) —Pastor A. W. Fuerstenau

Free German Reformed Church

Salem Church, located on the SW $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 7, T8, R4W, was organized in 1897. The church, built in the spring of 1898, is still on the same ground and has services every Sunday.

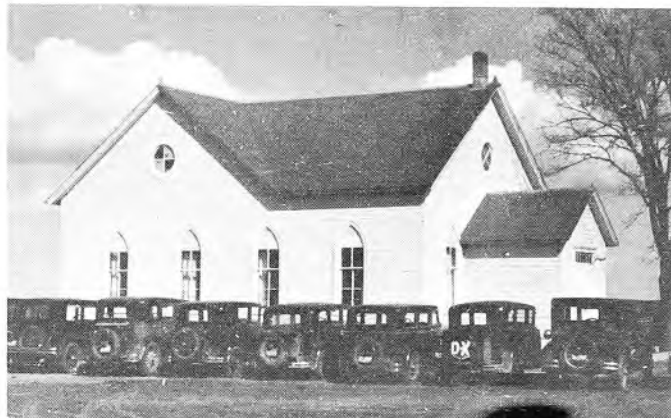


Photo from Martin Griess
Free Reformed Salem Church, 1932. It was built in 1898, and an addition was constructed in 1960.

Fillmore City

(The following four paragraphs are drawn directly, except for minor additions, from Alfred T. Andreas's *History of the State of Nebraska*, 1882.)

Fillmore City was the first town ever started in the county. It was situated on a bend of the West Blue River in the northwestern part of the county, near the York County line, 4 miles N of the present town of Grafton.

The history of this place begins with the year 1870, when E. L. Martin located here and laid out a town on his homestead. On February 10, 1871, J. E. Porter opened a store, and on March 10, a post office was established and E. L. Martin appointed postmaster. It was not long until there were two stores and a blacksmith shop in operation. But in the fall of 1871, the Burlington railroad line (which was originally planned to come through this region) was completed through the county, running about $4\frac{1}{4}$ miles S of the town, and with that rerouting went the bright prospects of Fillmore City. J. E. Porter moved his store to a new town on the railroad, called Hesperia, later Fairmont, and soon there was nothing left of the town.

In the following year (1872), however, C. M. Northrup located here and made preparations to build a mill. Together he and E. L. Martin laid out a town which was to be a bigger and better Fillmore City. To the original town site, which comprised the W $\frac{1}{2}$ of the NE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 6, T8, R3W, West Blue precinct, there was now added the E $\frac{1}{2}$ of the NE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 1, T8, R4W, Grafton precinct, and the precinct line was designated as the main street. The whole was surveyed and platted and filed in the office of the county clerk as a town site on December 10, 1872. A row of stately cottonwoods still marks the site.



Photo from William Swartz

Fillmore Mills in the early 1900's. Men on loading dock are Charles Carroll and Lester Fredericks.

The work on the flour mill progressed, and in 1873 it was completed and the manufacture of flour commenced. Fillmore City never grew to be a town, however, and C. M. Northrup soon sold his mill to Welch & Price. Later millers were J. A. Ellis, Jasper Culver, Lowell Snow, William Smith, and Les Fredericks. Mr. Fredericks was the last miller. The mill was torn down in 1923.

The *Hand-Book of Fillmore County* (1884) says: "The town of Fillmore lies 4 miles N of Grafton on the West Blue, in the pioneer settlement of the county, and beyond its delightful location is mainly noteworthy now as the site of the Fillmore Mills, owned and operated by Welch & Price. These mills are well built and equipped with four runs of burrs, have an unfailling water power, and are driven to full capacity on merchant and custom work. Mr. Welch is also interested in the steam mills at Fairmont, is a successful feeder of heavy pigs, and belongs to the race of driving, money-making men."

While Mr. Welch was running the mill, an Indian squaw with a papoose on her back came by one day where Mrs. Welch and her little red-haired girl were near their home. She asked Mrs. Welch in sign language if she would trade babies. Not understanding the language, but wishing to be agreeable, Mrs. Welch nodded. The squaw then deposited her papoose on the ground and made off with the red-haired child who had captured her fancy. Mrs. Welch ran to the mill for help, and her husband and the men who happened to be at the mill followed the squaw to the Indian camp, about a mile away, and traded babies again.

People from as far away as Geneva came with ox-drawn wagons to this mill and spent the night, returning the next day with their flour.

One man living near Fillmore City occasionally gave liquor to the Indians. After enjoying a bit too much of this, they would run their ponies back and forth across the bridge south of town through the whole night, disturbing the sleep of the people of the community with the noise.

After the first post office at Fillmore City was discontinued, a post office was established in 1873 in the home of John Shoff and he was appointed postmaster. This post office was later moved to Grafton.

Bixby

The trading center first called Palmer, after Judge Palmer, but named Lyman by the C.B. & Q. R.R. when they built their branch line in 1886, is located midway on the line between Sutton in Clay County and Lushton in York County. The settlers of this community had great hopes and a 40-acre plot was provided for a town site, but the town never developed.

In the early 1920's, when it was discovered that this place was being confused with another Lyman in the western

part of the state, the name was changed to Bixby to honor the brother of the depot agent at Lushton, who was a well-known Nebraska writer of that time.

Shortly after the branch line between Fairfield and Stromsburg was completed, an elevator was built at Lyman by Philip Schwab and August Groshans, and stockyards were constructed. Jacob Shroyer was a livestock buyer for many years and shipped many hundreds of hogs and cattle from Lyman and Bixby.

In 1901, John Eberhardt was operating the elevator for the Nebraska-Iowa Grain Company. Fred Ulmer followed him as manager in 1908 and soon after opened a small grocery store. Later managers were Adolph Trautman and Gilbert Trautman. In 1943, the Bixby non-stock Co-op Company was formed, and they purchased the elevator and are continuing its operation.



Photo from Calvin Serr

Second building of the Bixby elevator, about 1910. The man is Fred Ulmer, manager.

In the first elevator, horse power was used. The horse became blind from walking around in the dark room for such long periods. It needed no driver; when a new load of grain was dumped, it would start its rounds when spoken to. A gas engine replaced the horse power about 1910, and electric power has been used since 1948, when the R.E.A. lines were built through the township.

Many of the people living near Lyman-Bixby had come with the German immigration from Russia, where they had lived for several generations. They had been enticed to settle in Russia as a group by the German-born wife of a czar with the promise that neither they nor their descendants would ever have to enter military service. After the death of this czar and his wife, this promise was broken, and so once more they emigrated as a group and many settled in this territory. Some of the family names of this group include Serr, Trautman, Fuhrer, Peter, Griess, Hofmann, and Raucher. Some others of the early settlers in this community were Frank Littlefield, Pete Frundall, Thomas Watt, and Charles Allen.

—Mrs. Lee Parsons

SCHOOLS

District No. 8 was organized on January 15, 1872, comprising Secs. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 16, 17, and 18. In 1885, Secs. 17 and 18 were attached to District 31, and in 1914, Sec. 9 was detached and added to District 29. The first teacher in the district was Lottie Milholland.

District 8 was dissolved in June, 1965, and its territory annexed to District 2, Clay County, District 16, Fillmore County, and District 95, York County.

District No. 16 was organized on January 20, 1872, originally containing Secs. 19, 20, 29, 30, 31, and 32. On March 23, 1876, Secs. 23, 24, 25, 26, 35, and 36 were added. The first teacher was Ezra Witter.

Through the petition method, in 1956 all or parts of Districts 14, 29, 66, 70, 62, and 74 were added to District 16. The high school was closed in May, 1956, and the school reverted to Class I. In 1968, it was a class I school with 5 teachers and an enrollment of 80 pupils.



Photo from Lee Parsons

District No. 29 in 1896 or 1897. *Back row, left to right:* Maude Pringle, Edith Allen, George Urmsen, Willet Lugenbeel, Jim Urmsen, Ernest Johnson, Ray Johnson, Henry Kleinschmidt, and George Brady. *Second row:* Teacher Alice Jackson, Stella Evans, Emma Ackerman, Chauncey Evans. *Front row:* Lee Parsons, Hetty Evans, Fred Shroyer, Andrew Ackerman, and William Shroyer.

The first school in **District No. 29** was held in a dugout on the Fred Schaldecker farm on the SW $\frac{1}{2}$ of Sec. 2, Grafton township. There is no record of the number or names of the pupils, but the teacher, E. Clark, drew a salary of \$30 per month for a three-month term.

The district was formed in April, 1872, to comprise Secs. 1, 2, 3, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15. A small frame building about 15' x 15' was erected on a hill overlooking the valley through which School Creek runs. This was near the center of the district, on the SW $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 11. Later this building was enlarged to about 15' x 30' and still later a large hall was added onto the west end.

In October, 1873, Secs. 1 and 12 were dropped, but on June 15, 1880, the SW $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 12 was again added. On January 25, 1924, Sec. 9 was added. The small frame building erected in the 1870's and later enlarged served the needs of the community until 1932, when an enrollment of 40 made it badly overcrowded. A building fund had been started several years before, so it was possible to erect a modern building. With the support of a very active P.T.A., District 29 became the first Superior Standard school in the county. This



Photo from Lee Parsons

District No. 29—First Superior Standard school in the country (erected in 1932).

high degree of efficiency was maintained for several years, but with the enlargement of farms and consolidation of districts, which were trends of the times, the number of pupils decreased until, in 1956, the district was dissolved and annexed to District 16 at Grafton.

A partial list of the teachers who presided over District 29 before the turn of the century includes: E. Clark, Anna Brown, Shadrack Doty, Dora Kaufman, W. D. Ambler, Mary Shroyer, Susan Willis, Anna B. Waggoner, Eva Irwin, Frank Brannick, Alice Wallace, Adelaide Allen, Drusey Miles, Alice Jackson, and Grace Fitzgerald.

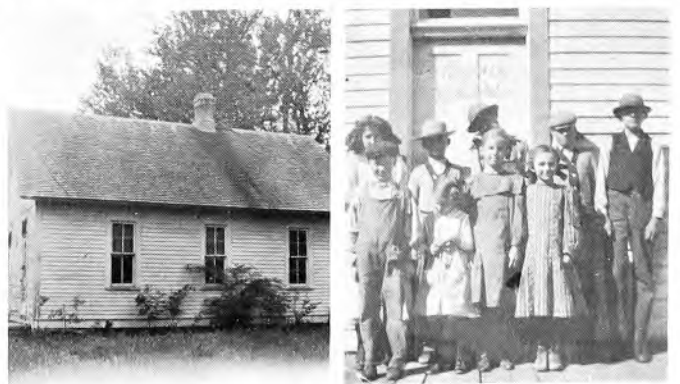
District No. 31 was organized on March 24, 1872, to include Secs. 19, 20, 21, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, and 33. In 1873, Secs. 19, 21, and 28 were attached to District 31. Since that last change, the district has contained the same territory. The first teacher in District 31 was Emma Cory.

Before the 1924-1925 term, a new two-room schoolhouse was built, and ninth and tenth grades were added. This organization continued until the end of the 1941-1942 term.

District 31 is the only Class I, one-teacher school now operating in Fillmore County. As recently as 1964, it had an enrollment of 26 pupils; but as of September, 1967, the enrollment had dropped to 10 pupils.

District No. 66 was organized on March 18, 1873, composed of Secs. 21, 22, 27, 28, 33, and 34. The first teacher was Belle Fisher. On July 9, 1956, District 66 was dissolved and annexed to District 16.

The first pupils in what later became **District No. 70** attended classes in the various homes in the community.



Photos from Erma Dixon and Wm. Swartz

On left: District No. 70 schoolhouse (commonly called Fillmore School) in 1952. *On right, students, 1910. Back row, left to right:* Murial Dixon, William Oberlander, Malcolm Mart, Bert Frederick, Glen Mart. *Front row:* Ray Frederick, Florence Allison, Erma Dixon, Marie Oberlander.

About 1880, a small building—12' x 14'—was used as a school for a few terms, and then a larger building was erected about 400 yards to the south on a site which remained the district's school yard as long as school was held there. This was on the NW ¼ of Sec. 1.

Some of the early teachers in District 70 were Nellie Stevens, Ella Bennett (Mrs. John K. Waring), Mary Little, Grace McCashland, Lydia Merrihew, Hattie Matteson, and Ed Standard.

An Indian camp was made every winter within a mile of the school. The Indians often came to the schoolhouse and sat around the stove, and the teacher had great difficulty getting them to leave. They would go to the mill and beg for grain and then dance around a tree just north of the school with their small sacks of meal. They also took animals which had died of cornstalk disease, and the schoolboys would steal up to the edge of their camp and watch to see if any Indians were being buried as a result of eating the flesh, but no burials were ever seen.

Following the trend of the times, the District 70 school was closed about 1955 and the land annexed to the Fairmont district. —Mrs. Lee Parsons



Photo from Mrs. Henry Rath
District No. 66 schoolhouse in 1928



Photo from Calvin Serr
"German School" located on the Valentine Peter farm (taken in 1910).



Photo from Mrs. Lee Parsons
District No. 8 in 1890. Back row, left to right: Ann Millholand, Grace Labart Moore, Nora Baass Lytle, Emma Salmen Kleinschmidt, Ed Arnold (teacher), Lillie Fairbanks, Laura Labart. Front row: unidentified boy, Charles Baass, Bill Baass, Charles Salmen, Ervin Ely, Cora Ely Salmen, Ellen Millholand, Lillie Ely Ebert, Emma Baass Rath. Seated children unidentified.

FAMILIES

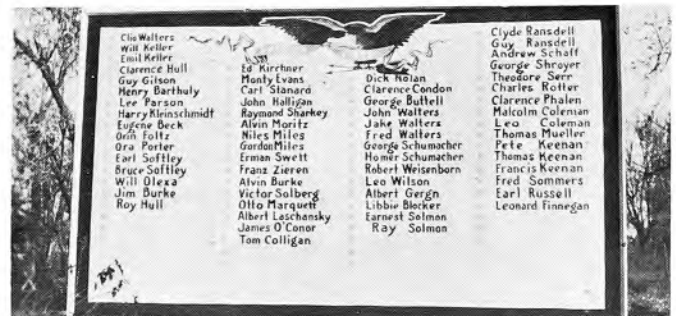


Photo from Mrs. John C. Griess
District No. 31 in 1912. Back row, left to right: Charlie Linder, Edgar Fuehrer, Louise Issler, Mattie Hungeker (teacher), Louise Griess, Erna Leitner, John C. Griess, Earl Cory, John Linder. Second row: Esther Ulmer, Dora Linder, Verna May, Sylvia May, Irene Griess, Frances Baas, Sam Issler, Calvin Serr. Front row: Alice Linder, Ray Linder, Gertrude Serr, Lillie Leitner, Lillie Linder, Ervin Ulmer, Rudolph Ulmer, Minnie Griess.



Photos from Lee Parsons and Leo Schaf
First World War boys, 1919. Back row, left to right: Alfred Keller, Alvin Moritz, Dick Nolan, Tom Colgan, Sam Marsh, unidentified man, Tom Mueller, Ed Marsh, unidentified man, and Al Burke. Front row: Emil Keller, Danny Hull, Emmett Real, Jack Halligan, Orin Foltz, Leo Coleman, and Leonard Finnegan.

"Charles S. Allen's 480-acre stock ranch, 4 miles NW of town [SE ¼ of Sec. 10] is a model stock and grain farm, well watered by School Creek and by wells with windmills. The house, barn, stables, feed yards, and 5 miles of wire fence cost \$2,500. Mr. Allen raised 10,000 bushels of corn, 2,000 bushels of oats, 500 bushels of barley, 500 bushels of wheat, and 300 bushels of rye last year. He has 40 acres of clover and timothy meadow, keeps 50 high-grade stock cattle (mostly breeding cows), feeds two carloads each of steers and pigs, has made the bulk of a \$15,000 property out of Fillmore County soil in the last dozen years, . . . drives work for all there is in it, hails from the Mohawk Valley, . . . and speaks in high terms of the country."

—Fillmore County Hand-Book (1884)

The farm and home of A. Ambler, the Fillmore County Hand-Book reported in 1884, "lying on the southeastern border of the town, is noteworthy for its fine thrifty groves of catalpa, cottonwood, and box elder; the long columns of shade trees that outline it, the substantial horse, carriage,



Photo from Mrs. Earl Vauck
Mr. and Mrs. Fred Baass, early settlers (pictured about 1890). Fred Baass purchased his land from homesteader William Smith in 1883.

Grafton Township Homestead Map

John A. Smith	O. H. Parsons			Daniel George	Rebecca A. Hill			Irma H. Malick	Jacob A. Werts		
Thomas Milholland	Peter George			Abbie Chase	Winfield S. Mattern			Fredrick Schaldecker	Calvin J. Adams		
		George H. Franklin	Jacob H. Labert	William N. Smith		Annie K. Shroyer	J. H. Dunagan			Joseph Frazier	Jasper Culver
		John Schuler	John Lieder			Benjamin Dunagan	Charles S. Allen			John K. Watt	George P. Wintzsteen
John Honey								Joseph Lytle	Owen T. Lytle	Jasper Culver	
William C. Benedict	George Honey			School Land				Arthur Murdock	Norton M. Stanord		
		Daniel Ellison	Elisha A. Littlefield			Thomas Watt	Montgomery Robinson			Joseph S. Le Hew	John L. Jenkins
			Johann Fuhrer				Daniel W. Besack				
		Johann Rath	Peter Honey			James O. DeQuass	George U. Lytle			Phineas B. Jones	Freshie C. Clark
							Robert J. Menzie				
Wallace Fairbank	Charles Dunning			William Wesley Jordan	John D. Slesman			Mathias Marlott	Daniel Deloss Angell	Andrew Jackson	
Thomas Feigh	George Gell	Warren C. Hull		Orin Belknap	Lemuel L. Evans			William Pitta	Joseph Tatro	Jonathan Tatro	
		Edwin Candall									
		Harry Philp	W. H. Gould			Zeno Doty	Alonzo A. Doty	Franklin W. Hart			
		Lane R. Briggs	Miles L. Locke			Benjamin Hanger	Elizabeth Stevens				School Land

and grain barns; the strong crops of corn and small grains grown the past season, and the well-bred herd of high-grade shorthorns and pigs which Mr. Ambler is steadily improving. He came in '75, from Wisconsin, and made a most fortunate location, has increased his means 300 per cent, is an earnest Christian man, and is delighted with the country."

—Mrs. Ernest Kleinschmidt

William H. Bosserman, known as "Uncle Billy," was born in Licking County, Ohio, in 1842. He spent three years of service in the Civil War and was mustered out on June 22, 1865, at Salisbury, North Carolina. In 1871, he came to Fillmore County, where he homesteaded in West Blue township and erected a small frame house with lumber he hauled from Crete. He moved in 1877 to the then new village of Grafton and worked at the carpenter's trade. He also conducted a furniture store and in 1897 was appointed postmaster by President William McKinley. The Bossermans had four sons: Harry, Charles, William, and John.—Mrs. Ernest Kleinschmidt

Of **A. W. Chase**, whose 160-acre farm lay 2 miles E of Grafton, the *Fillmore County Hand-Book* (1884) said that the farm, "upon a commanding divide, is one of the most valuable quarter-sections in this division of the county. It is improved with a comfortable home, convenient stables, sheds, and feed yards; a well and windmill, a fine orchard and plenty of small fruits; extensive bluegrass lawns, embellished with 30 varieties of shade trees; heavy sheltering groves, long columns of forest trees, and well-sheltered feed lots stocked to tame grasses. Mr. Chase grows 3,000 bushels of corn and good crops of small grain, feeds 40 prime pigs and keeps a small herd of cattle. He came here in 1870 from Illinois without a dollar, borrowed money to pay the entry fee upon his land, and now owns this model farm; has a quarter-section of wild land south of the county seat, and could sell his personal and real property for \$8,000 or \$9,000. Mr. Chase has just closed a year of highly creditable service as county treasurer, is a gentleman of liberal and progressive views, excellent judgment and executive gifts, . . . and charitable to a fault."

"**Jasper Culver's** 170-acre West Blue Farm, lying 3 miles W of Grafton, is watered by the Blue and improved with groves, a good house, barn, stable, and orchard, is in a good state of cultivation, and is one of the best of the old homesteads in this region. Mr. Culver also owns a 160-acre farm 3 miles NW of town [NE ¼ of Sec. 14], upon which he has a thrifty grove of 40 acres, embracing several varieties of native timber. He came here a dozen years ago from Ohio, with little means, has now town and country estate worth \$8,000, is a live, pushing, reliable man of excellent standing . . ."

—Fillmore County Hand-Book (1884)



Photo from Mary Badger Halsey

Nimrod J. Dixon Homestead about 1900

Left to right: Emma (Mrs. Luther Valentine), Lloyd, Mrs. and Mr. N. J. Dixon, Minnie (Mrs. O. S. Townsend), and John.

A mile below the Fillmore Mills was **Nimrod J. Dixon's** 320-acre stock farm, "embracing nearly a mile of river front, 30 acres of river timber, a good home, and 200 acres

under plow. The farm is all bottom land and was settled as early as 1866 by Mr. Dixon, who broke the first prairie and planted the first crop in the county in 1867. He came here from Pennsylvania, with a single horse and \$10, has quietly held the situation through all the ups and downs of pioneering, has now one of the finest bottom-land farms in the county, and is worth, in personal and real estate, close to \$9,000."

—Fillmore County Hand-Book (1884)

One whose history should be included with those of the early settlers of Grafton township is **Shadrack Doty**. Very little definite knowledge about his origin or family is obtainable, but many of the younger pioneers remembered him as one of their first teachers, and all of them agree that he was a "good teacher." One recalled that he never failed to begin each school day with prayer.

As early as 1871, Mr. Doty was teaching in District 8, and records show that he later taught in Districts 16, 29, 66, 11, and 2, and in other schools outside Fillmore County. His ambition was to continue in his profession for 50 terms, and it is said that he missed this goal by just one term.

His tombstone in the Grafton cemetery bears the dates November 20, 1852, to July 28, 1912.

On the earliest maps available of Grafton township more than a section of land is listed in the names of Shadrack, Frances Ann, Alonzo, and Zeno Doty, the last three thought to be a sister and two brothers of Shadrack. Zeno Doty also taught school in District 66 for several years (1875 to 1878).

Another name on this map is that of Eli Oryall, who was a stepson of Shadrack Doty and also a relative of Joseph Tatro, on whose land the town of Grafton was located. Many people recalled the day when a small child of Eli's got lost during threshing time. The machine was stopped and the crew, as well as other neighbors, joined for many hours in the search. Eli himself was the one who, by lantern light, found his child fast asleep in the tall grass and weeds growing in the middle of one of the seldom-traveled roads of that time. A joyous shout from the father signaled the good news to the other searchers.

—Mrs. Lee Parsons

Daniel Ely, a veteran of the Civil War, married Susan DeHaven at Monroe, Wisconsin. Four boys were born to this union while they were still in Wisconsin. Daniel Ely, with his wife and boys, came to Sutton in 1877. A girl was born to them in June. Daniel rented a farm in Hamilton County and lived there until he bought a place 8 miles NE of Sutton, the homestead of Peter George (the SE ¼ of Sec. 6, Grafton). This place didn't have a house on it except a combination dugout and log cabin, cut into the edge of a hill. The first floor was a dugout, with bricked-up walls; the second-floor room, above the hill, was made of logs. The family



Photo from Mrs. George Ebert

The Daniel Ely family about 1888. Left to right: Clarence, Milton, Cora, Mrs. Ely, Orin, Gaylord, Mr. Ely, Alice, Lillie, Clinton, and Irving. Not in the picture were Mary and Grace.

all slept in the second-floor room. Three children were born to them in the log cabin, Irving, Lillie, and Alice. They lived there for several years, and then Daniel built a frame house on the hill.

They were living in the frame house when the blizzard of 1888 struck, on January 12. Four of the boys were in school. Daniel Ely rode on horseback to the school and told the teacher to keep them there all night. All of the children who lived west of the school stayed all night. The teacher, Edwin Arnold, lived 3 miles W of the schoolhouse and drove a horse and buggy to school. He had a wife and some small children.

Will Salmen had been to the flour mill in his wagon and he stopped at the schoolhouse as the storm began and took all the children living east of the school along with him. Gaylord Ely and Ernest Kleinschmidt, the oldest boys remaining, went to the closest neighbor's house (Will Keller's), and Mrs. Keller baked enough biscuits for them all to eat. The next morning was clear but very cold. The schoolhouse was about 1 mile SE of the Ely farm.

The Daniel Elys had 11 children, 6 boys and 5 girls: Milton D., Gaylord, Clinton J., Clarence A., Cora May, Irving W., Lillie Pearl, Alice Myrtle, Orin P., Mary Elizabeth, and Grace. Grace died of spinal meningitis at the age of two years. Daniel Ely, his wife, and four of the children lived on the farm until he fell ill and died in 1904. A few years later, Mrs. Ely sold the farm and they moved to town.

—Mrs. Lillie Ebert

The J. J. Fitzgerald family came to Nebraska on June 1, 1880. The family consisted of J. J. Fitzgerald, his wife Mary, four sons—John, Thomas, Edward, and James—and three daughters—Grace, Ann, and Ellen. The father and the boys came in a boxcar with their tools, implements, and stock. The mother and daughters came on a passenger train.



Photo from Mary Hoarty
The J. J. Fitzgerald family in 1910. Left to right: J. J. Fitzgerald, Sr., Ann, Mrs. Fitzgerald, John T., John J. Fitzgerald, Jr., Mrs. Edward Fitzgerald, and Ellen.

The family came from South Elgin, Illinois, where they had lived for a short time after moving from Chicago. Mr. Fitzgerald, a carpenter by trade, had been building houses in Chicago. But he had always wanted to be a farmer, so he decided to leave Elgin and come to Nebraska, as farm life would be better for the family.

When Grandfather was looking for a place to settle, he had two Irish settlements in mind, Grafton and Greeley, and he intended to look over each and then decide where to buy. But when he came to Grafton he met an old friend, former army captain Patrick S. Real, who talked him into buying land in Grafton, and so he never got to Greeley.

Their first home on the farm—the NW ¼ of Sec. 24—was a part sod, part dugout house on the side of the hill on which they later built their permanent house. This house was built in sections, and the result was floors of different levels and ceilings of different heights. Grandfather lived on this

farm until his death in 1913.

All the Fitzgerald girls became schoolteachers, and Grace and Ellen taught for many years in the neighboring schools. Edward became a doctor and practiced in Omaha. James became a lawyer and later a District Court judge. Thomas lived in Grafton. John and Grace lived on the farm until their deaths, as did Ann and Ellen except for a few years late in their lives.

—Mary Fitzgerald Hoarty

Albert F. Garbe, a pioneer of Fillmore County, was a native of Stillwater, Minnesota, where he and his father, Frederick Garbe, were engaged in farming. His father also did stone and brick masonry work. Hearing about the plentiful and low-priced land in Nebraska and about the homesteading possibilities, they decided to sell most of their belongings in Minnesota and come to Fillmore County. They loaded some machinery, tools, and household goods into a freight car and came along with their goods, arriving at Fairmont in April, 1879.



Photo from Mrs. Arthur Heckman
Albert Garbe, age about 25

There were no homesteads available any more, so they bought 200 acres of railroad land in the NW ¼ of Sec. 1, Grafton township, at about \$10 an acre. Soon after arriving, they built a frame house on this land; part of this house is still standing. This farm is located on the Blue River, and the water and timber available were valuable assets. They broke some sod and planted a crop the first year. After raising good crops for three years, Mr. Garbe bought the SW ¼ of Sec. 1 adjoining their home farm. Sod had to be broken on nearly all the farm ground.

Farm prices were low, but crops were fairly good for the first 12 years. But in 1893 and 1894 drouth hit pretty hard; those years were known as the poor years. Crops were so poor that many farmers had to find other sources of income to pay taxes and make a living. So Mr. Garbe caught fish and sold them in surrounding towns and to farmers. He also shot jack rabbits during the winter and shipped them frozen to St. Louis. In 1895, rains came, bringing better crops and a return of better times. After eight more years of good crops, he bought the SW ¼ of Sec. 12 in 1903.

In 1904, Albert F. Garbe was united in marriage to Augusta B. Hackbarth, who was a native of Custer County and a daughter of a pioneer homesteader there. To this union was born one daughter, Elsie, now Mrs. Arthur Heckman, who is still living on the home place.

In pioneer days, the Blue River was a sort of hunter's and fisherman's paradise where fish and game were plentiful and easy to get. During the '80's and '90's, Indians were given permission to leave the reservations and hunt and fish and trap along the river. On one occasion the Indians camped on School Creek about ½ mile from the Garbe farmyard. On one warm February day Mr. Garbe visited the camp and found the squaws were washing. The little Indian children were running around naked while their clothes were being washed. Indians would come to the farm homes to beg for food or feed for their horses. The Indians also liked to play cards. To please them, Mr. Garbe would play with them, but he let them win, fearing they might become angry and could not be trusted. On another occasion an Indian came to the

farm to beg for hay for his horses. He was allowed to help himself at the haystack. Mr. Garbe was very much surprised at the large amount of hay the Indian could carry away in a bundle made with a rope sling over his back.

Albert Garbe told of another incident, where a neighbor had lost a large steer from cornstalk disease. The Indians learned of it, and when the farmer had skinned the animal they quartered the carcass. One Indian slung a hind quarter weighing twice as much as himself over his shoulder and carried it off with ease.

Besides the conventional farm crops and methods which are standard in this locality, Albert Garbe tried many side lines in farming, such as orchards and tame grass, selling fruit and grass seed commercially. He also kept bee hives and a pond stocked with game fish. In 1912, he operated an amusement park with a baseball diamond, a roller-skating rink, and a dance pavilion. He also built a dam and a power plant on the river to generate electricity and furnish electric power to the town of Lushton. As early as the 1890's he also had pump irrigation from the river.



Blue River Amusement Park power dam constructed in 1916 on the Garbe farm. Insert shows water wheel; photo below shows the dance hall at the park.

After a long and colorful life, Albert F. Garbe passed away in November, 1937, at the age of 77 years and 11 months.

—Elsie Garbe Heckman



Photo from John C. Griess
The Johann Griess family in 1875. Back row, left to right: Margaret, Elizabeth, John, Christian. Second row: Magdalene, Mrs. Johann Griess, Johann Griess, Henry. Front: Jacob (on mother's lap), Peter G.

The Griess family originally settled in York County but moved to Sec. 30, Grafton, in 1901.

William G. Hainey, pioneer merchant of Grafton and one of the best-known citizens of Fillmore County, was one of the earliest settlers of this area. His parents emigrated to America from County Longford, Ireland, in 1839. William was born on the present site of Cleveland, Ohio, in 1840. In 1848, his parents moved to St. Louis, where his father worked for the American Fur Co. for three years, sorting hides and furs. There William spent his boyhood and youth attending school and receiving good business training by clerking in a store.

In 1859, he went to Pikes Peak, Colorado, where he spent some time in mining. Later he worked in the quartermaster division of the regular army on the frontiers, traveling over Colorado and New Mexico. He then entered the employ of the Overland Mail Company. He drove a stage from Fort Lyon to Santa Fe, then to Fort Union and Fort Craig, and from there to Parajo, New Mexico. He made one trip to Death Valley. In 1864, he resigned this position and came to Nebraska City, where he began freighting across the plains to Denver. He was thus engaged for three years, during which time he had three narrow escapes from the Indians. He then located at Green River, Wyoming Territory, where he helped lay out the town.

In 1869, he returned to Nebraska City and remained there until 1875, when he came to Grafton. Here he bought the town's first general-merchandise store, which had been opened a short time before by Captain P. S. Real. This store continued to be operated by members of his family until 1940, when the stock was auctioned off and the business closed. He was an extensive land owner, and held some 1,200 acres. He also had an interest in the creamery and for a time served as bank president.

He was married in 1870 to Mary B. Condon in St. Louis. They had eight children: Mary L., George F., Walter, Sarah B., Margaret E., William R., Edwin F., and Carrie. Mr. Hainey died on July 23, 1908.

—Mrs. Lloyd Kleinschmidt

Patrick Halligan came from Ireland in 1877 and settled in Fillmore County west of Grafton. After starting homesteading with a tree claim, he sent for his wife, Bridget Kelly Halligan, who had been born in Drogheda, County Louth, Ireland. Their small son, Patrick, was left in Ireland with Mrs. Halligan's sister Catherine. Catherine followed later, when young Patrick was about five years old, and came to live with the Halligans.



Photo from Mrs. Rudolph Nehe
Mrs. Bridget Halligan about 1900

The Halligans had a small three-room house, which they enlarged as their family grew. Their children were Patrick (born in Ireland), Mary Jane, Alice, George, Mary, Frank, Rose, Ann, and Nellie. Mary Jane died when she was small; George was drowned in the Blue River when he was 20; and Nellie died as a young woman, leaving two daughters.

During the blizzard of 1888, because the Halligans lived near the school, the children were all at home when the blizzard struck. The family all had to go to bed to keep warm, since they could not get out for fuel.

Patrick Halligan died of a heart attack at the age of 54, while working in the fields. Mrs. Halligan stayed on the farm with the children until Frank married. Then she, Rose, Ann, and Nellie moved into Grafton. The family maintained the land until after her death in 1939 at the age of 83.

Four of the Halligan family are still living: Mrs. Rudolph Nehe of Lincoln, Nebraska, with three of her four children (the other daughter lives in South Dakota); Mrs. Charles Carroll, with two children living in Nebraska; Frank Halligan and his wife (the former Elizabeth Miller of Grafton) live in Los Angeles with a son and daughter (another son lives in Nebraska); and Mrs. William O'Leary of Lincoln. One granddaughter, who was raised by Grandmother Halligan, lives in Lincoln with two daughters, and her sister lives in the East. There are in all 11 grandchildren, 34 great-grandchildren, and 15 great-great-grandchildren. Of these only 4 of the grandchildren, 13 of the great-grandchildren, and 7 of the great-great-grandchildren have left Nebraska.

—Mrs. Mayme Carroll

Frederick Hofmann came to the United States from Odessa, Russia, in 1873, when he was 18 years old. In October, 1883, he purchased the NW ¼ of Sec. 6 from John A. Smith for \$2,500. Frederick Hofmann died in October, 1921, leaving this NW ¼ to his son Theodore, who farmed it until 1955. Then Theodore moved to Sutton, and his son Ruben now owns and operates the farm.

E. H. S. James came to Nebraska from Seaford, Delaware, his native home. He had a drug business first in Greenwood, Nebraska. He then moved to Osceola, and from there to Grafton in 1889. The drugstore was at first located on the west side of Main Street and was known as James & Meaker, then as James & Fulmer. About 1903, the store came to be known as the Corner Drugstore when it was moved to the east side of the street.



Photo from Eugene Jennett
Wedding picture of Mr. and Mrs. John Hugh Jennett.



Photo from Mrs. James Whoughton
The E. H. S. James family about 1900. Left to right: E. H. S. James, Ruth James, and Susan James. Bottom center: Glen James.

Mr. James married Susan Fisher of Fairmont in 1890. Her parents were early pioneers in Fillmore County, having come from Michigan in 1871 and homesteaded in West Blue township. Susan was an early Fillmore County teacher. To this union were born two daughters, Glen and Ruth.

Mr. James operated the drugstore from 1889 until his death on January 3, 1934. In the fall of 1934, Mrs. James moved to Hastings, where she lived with her daughter Glen until her own death in August, 1952.

John Hugh Jennett and his wife Maria came to Nebraska with their family on March 1, 1893, and settled on a farm they had purchased from the Tatro family 1½ miles W of Grafton. Hugh Jennett was born in Bureau County, Illinois, and his wife near Streator, Illinois. The '90's were not fruitful years for farmers, and so Mr. Jennett resumed his old work of school teaching for a couple of years. He took a great

interest in state and local affairs, serving as a member of the Grafton school board for a number of years. He also served on the board of county supervisors, acting as chairman for some time. Later he was named cashier of the Grafton Bank and worked in that capacity until his health failed. He died on February 24, 1901, at the age of 48 years.

Mrs. Jennett continued to live on the farm until 1912, when she moved to a new home in Grafton. She died on July 7, 1932, at the age of 87 years. The surviving children of the family are: Frank, of Dalton, Nebraska; Leo, of Exeter; Mary Jennett Casey, and Katherine, both of Omaha; Oliver, of Lincoln; Arthur, Elizabeth, and Alice Jennett Real, all of California. Emmett died in February, 1956, and Nellie Jennett McGerr in November, 1965.

—Leo Jennett

Henry Clay Johnson was born in Hayesville, Ohio, in 1834. He married Harriet Ciper in 1872, but she passed away at an early age, leaving him with five young children. He took them to a new home in Illinois for a short time and then pushed on westward to Grafton, Nebraska, in the spring of 1877.

The Burlington Railroad had received from the government a grant of every odd-numbered section of land for 20 miles on both sides of the railroad line and the right-of-way through every even-numbered section along the line through the entire state from Crete, Nebraska, on west. John D. McFarland, Land Commissioner, appointed H. C. Johnson the company's agent for Fillmore County, a position he held for many years. He was also a justice of the peace for several terms.

Mr. Johnson spent the winter of 1896 in California and decided to make that state his home. He moved there in 1899 with his daughter Bertha and son Edrow and spent the remainder of his life there until his death in 1913.

Another son, Oscar, remained in Grafton. At the time of the 1888 blizzard, he and another man rode horses to the

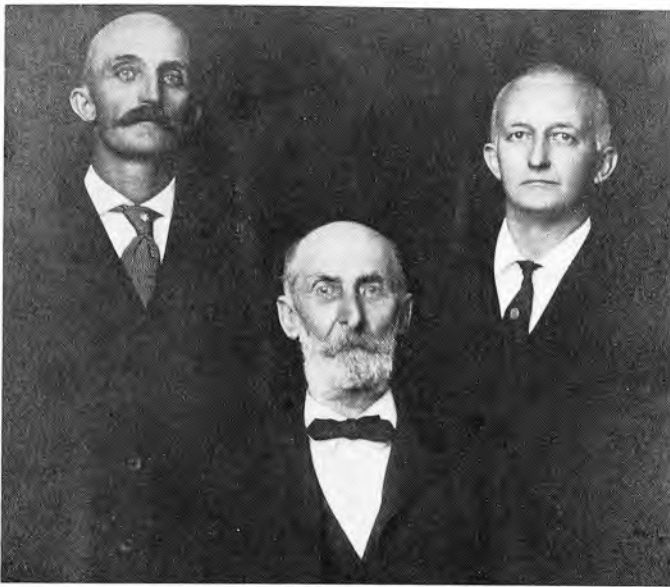


Photo from Ray Johnson
Henry Clay Johnson and sons about 1899. Left, Oscar; right, Willis.

Grafton school with long ropes attached to their saddles. The pupils held onto these ropes and were led to their homes, if possible. When they reached the Johnson home, about a mile from school, their eyes were so plastered with frozen snow that they went no farther, and the rest of the children stayed there.

In 1889, Oscar Johnson married Malinda Philina Garrett and received as a wedding gift from his father, H. C. Johnson, a deed to a farm on the NE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 2. This had been homesteaded by Jacob Werts in 1866. Oscar and his wife moved to this farm in 1894 and suffered through the terrible drouth of that period. During this time he raised many hogs but no grain because of the drouth, and so he turned the sows loose to raise their own litters. One sow wandered to the farm of a neighbor, Rudolph Salmen; when he reported this to Mr. Johnson, he was told to keep the hogs if he could feed them.

The Oscar Johnsons had two sons, Ernest and Ray. In 1920, Mr. and Mrs. Johnson retired from the farm and moved to Grafton, where they spent the remainder of the lives. Mrs. Johnson died in 1932, and Oscar Johnson passed on in 1940.

—Ernest Johnson

Thomas Keenan and his son Peter purchased the SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 27 from the C. B. & Q. R.R. for \$8 per acre in 1877. This farm is presently owned by the heirs of John N. Keenan, son of Peter. Thus three generations of Keenans have been the only owners of this land which is now being farmed by Francis and Jerry Keenan, sons of John N. Keenan.

—Thomas J. Keenan



Photo from Thomas Keenan
Mr. and Mrs. Peter Keenan—taken on their Golden Wedding Anniversary, May 30, 1937.



Photo from Mrs. Henry Pope
John Linder family pictures. Left: Mr. and Mrs. Linder in 1865. Right: taken in 1890. The Linder children in 1890; Left to right: Jenny, Charley, John, Belle.

John Linder, born in Canton Berne, Switzerland, in 1835, emigrated in 1852 to Wisconsin, where he lived for two years in Milwaukee. He then went to Monroe, Wisconsin, where he and his father conducted a meat market for several years. On October 7, 1861, he enlisted in Co. K, 9th Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry, and served 3 years and 2 months, receiving his discharge on December 5, 1864.

John Linder and Elydia George were married in 1866. In 1872, with their two little girls, they left by covered wagon for Nebraska, where they homesteaded on the SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 8, Grafton township. They lived in the covered wagon while they built a small frame house which was shared with other settlers until they could provide homes of their own. A few years later, John Linder was joined by his father, John Linder, Sr., and together they purchased the NE 240 acres of Sec. 17. After the death of his father, Charles P. Linder became the owner of the original homestead and the N 40 in Sec. 17, and John Linder III became the owner of the S 200 acres.

John Linder III died on October 15, 1954, and in 1955 his farm was sold to a new owner. Charles P. Linder died on May 18, 1956. The original homestead is now owned by the Charles P. Linder heirs.

—Mrs. Henry Pope

Arthur Murdock was born in Jefferson County, Ohio, August 17, 1842, and lived in Belmont County, Ohio, until he came to Nebraska. He enlisted on September 1, 1862, in Company E, 15th Ohio Volunteer Infantry, and took part in the battles of Stone River, Nashville, Mission Ridge, and many skirmishes. He was mustered out at Louisville, Kentucky, in May, 1865. He was married in 1869 to Cassie Dilworth. They had five children: Ada L., Edna, Mattie, Clyde, and an infant son.

In 1871, he located on a homestead of 160 acres, the SW $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 14, Grafton. Later, in 1879, he took charge of a lumber yard in Grafton for Goodman, Bogue & Co. of Chicago. Around 1916 he moved to Denver, where he spent the rest of his life. The farm in Sec. 14 was sold to E. F. Kleinschmidt, who built a complete new set of farm buildings.

Herman B. Nehe was born in 1842 in Prussia. After serving with the German army in the Franco-Prussian War, he married Mary Gesana. Their wedding trip was a voyage to the United States. They landed in New Orleans and then proceeded to St. Louis, where Mr. Nehe helped build the famous Eads Bridge. They then came on to Grafton, where they lived in town while breaking sod and building a farm home 2 miles NW of Grafton.

To this union were born two sons, Rudolph and John. The boys grew to manhood on this farm. Herman Nehe died in 1904, followed by Mrs. Nehe in 1907.

Rudolph married Alice Halligan of Grafton. They had four children: Herman, Agnes, Helen, and Raymond. The Rudolph Nehes lived on a farm 7 miles NW of Grafton until they moved to Lincoln in 1923. There Rudolph died in 1934; his widow still lives in Lincoln with the youngest son, Raymond. Herman Nehe also resides in Lincoln. He and his wife



The Herman Nehe family in 1892. Seated: Mr. and Mrs. Nehe. Standing, left to right: Rudolph and John.

Mary have five children: Marjorie Kannolt, Nancy Krueger, Gerald, James, and Mary Beth.

John Nehe married Sarah O'Connor in Grafton, where they lived on a farm until 1933, when they moved to Omaha. They had four children: Vincent, Gerald, Eugene, and Mary. Vincent died at 38, Gerald at 7, and Mary at 21. Eugene, the only living child, resides in Oakland, Iowa, and is married to the former Margaret Connelly of Omaha. They have five children: Nancy Lyman of Weeping Water, Mary Jane of Omaha, and Jeanne, Robert, and Patricia, all living at home.

The Nehe boys, Rudolph and John, passed on their early memories and stories told by their parents. While Herman Nehe lived in St. Louis, he bought a revolver. The year before they had a crop he provided most of the meat for the table with this revolver. This was during the time he was breaking the sod on the farm, which he bought from the railroad for \$8 an acre.

When Rudolph started to school at Grafton he could speak very little English, but he learned it rapidly in school and in turn taught it to his younger brother John. Their mother never did learn to speak very fluent English.

The main thing John remembered about the blizzard of 1888 was that Rudolph was in school two miles from home. He started home with a schoolmate, Jim Fitzgerald, but the storm soon grew so bad that he got lost. He finally found a fence and followed it home.

—Mrs. Eugene Nehe

Patrick O'Connor was born in County Mayo, Ireland, in 1857, and came to America when he was 12. Mary Ann Real, whose father and mother were born in Ireland, was born in Illinois in 1858. Patrick and Mary met and married in Illinois. A daughter, Sarah, and two sons, Mark and John, were born there; John died.



Photo from Paul O'Connor
O'Connor family reunion, about 1915. 1-Patrick O'Connor, Sr., 2-Mrs. Patrick O'Connor, Sr., 3-Patrick O'Connor, Jr., 4-Mrs. Patrick O'Connor, Jr.

They moved to Nebraska and homesteaded 6 miles N of McCook in 1888. Children born there were Patrick, Julia, Margaret, Marcella, and James. The family endured the hardships of drouth and grasshoppers.

In 1900, they moved to a 120-acre farm ½ mile W of the present Grafton Public School. Shortly after this, they purchased a quarter-section ½ mile N of their first farm and established their home there. Here another son, Charles, was born. One night, while Patrick was away, this house burned down, and Mary took the children to the Fitzgerald farm. They later put up another house, but in 1919 moved to Omaha.

Patrick O'Connor died on June 30, 1934, and Mary followed him in death on December 10, 1935. O'Connor children who are now deceased are Patrick, Mark, James, and Sarah.

—Mrs. Paul O'Connor

Orin H. Parsons was born near Dorset, Ohio, on April 14, 1847. He was one of the younger members of a large family. He spent his boyhood in this community. At the age of 17, he enlisted in Company K of the 177th Ohio Regiment and served through the last 10 months of the Civil War. After his discharge, he came west in 1866 to make his own way in the world and landed in Farmers Valley, Nebraska. Subsequently he clerked in the J. C. Merrill general-merchandise store and Hoerger's hardware store in Sutton and the W. G. Hainey store in Grafton. He also served for a time as a guard at the Nebraska State Penitentiary.

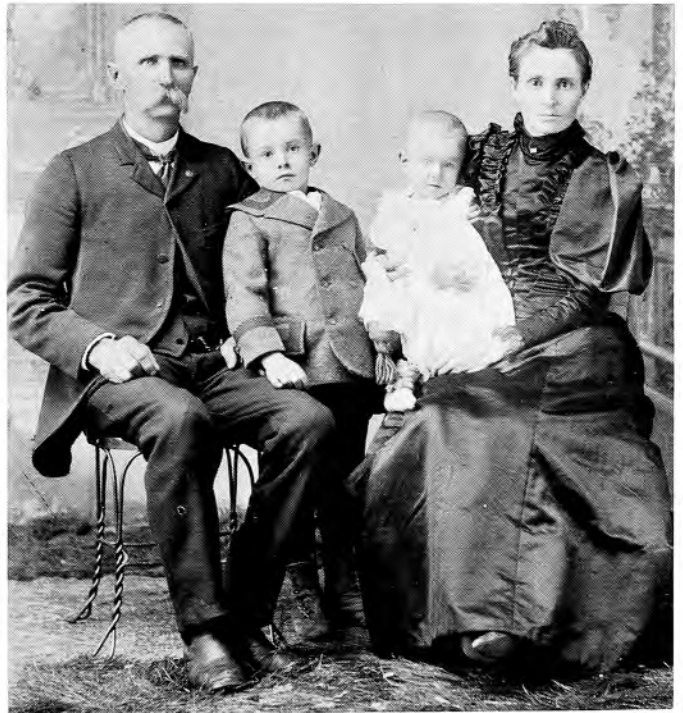


Photo from Lee Parsons

The Orin Parsons family about 1897. Left to right: Orin, Lee, Don, Sarah.

On February 15, 1873, he received title to his homestead on the NE ¼ of Sec. 6 in Grafton township. Later he sold this land and, on November 9, 1877, bought the NW ¼ of Sec. 2 from J. H. Malik, one of the first settlers in Fillmore County, who had acquired this land in 1866.

Around 1890, Orin Parsons returned to Ohio and married Sarah Elizabeth Lee. They took up their residence on the Malik homestead, where he had built a small frame house, which he later added onto. Here their three children, Lee, Don, and Lucille, were born.

Orin Parsons died in January, 1917. The eldest son, Nathaniel Lee, still lives on this farm, which he purchased from the other heirs in 1930 after the death of their mother. A modern home was built in 1934 following the destruction of the original frame house by fire. In 1940, one of the first

irrigation wells in Fillmore County was drilled on this farm and has been in steady operation ever since.

—*N. L. Parsons*

Mr. and Mrs. **Valentine Peter, Sr.**, and their 11 children—Valentine, Jr., Elizabeth, Philip, Ann Marie, Katherina, Eva, Christina, Andrew, Margaret, Philipina, and Hannah—came from Odessa, Russia, arriving in Sutton on November 11, 1878, Sutton was chosen because relatives had settled there. The family lived with these relatives until they built a sod house on land purchased from the railroad, the N ½ of the NW ¼ of Sec. 28. He later added to his holdings, and one 80 (the S ½ of the NW ¼) is still owned by William Peter, a grandson. Their sod house was well constructed; it remained intact until about 1916. Onto the sod house, in the '80's, they built a frame addition which is still standing.



Photo from Albert Rauscher
Mr. and Mrs. Michael Rauscher in 1875.



Photo from Mrs. Hannah Nuss
Mr. and Mrs. Valentine Peter in 1880

The Peters experienced all the hardships of pioneer life, such as grasshoppers, drouth, and hail. At one time, a prairie fire started from the smokestack of a railroad engine threatened the farmstead. Indian squaws with papooses on their backs were frequent visitors, begging for money and also asking for any animals that had died.

Three of the Peter children were in school at the time of the great blizzard of 1888. The teacher dismissed school, and these children walked a mile and a half to their home. The older brother took the two little sisters by the hand and followed the fence. The girls' arms were frostbitten. In the meantime, the father and another daughter had started with a horse and buggy to get the schoolchildren, but lost their way. They let the horse choose his way, and he brought them back home safely.

Valentine Peter, Sr., passed away January 9, 1914, at the age of 83. Two daughters, Mrs. Hannah Nuss, aged 94, and Mrs. Margaret May, 92, are the surviving members of the family. Both live in Sutton. —*Mrs. John Rauscher*

Michael Rauscher, Sr., with his wife and five sons, came from Odessa, Russia, and arrived in Sutton in 1875. He was a shoemaker and followed that trade until September, 1886, when he bought the SW ½ of the SW ¼ of Sec. 31, Grafton township, from the Burlington Railroad for \$500. In 1888, Michael Rauscher sold this farm to his son Jacob, who raised a family of seven girls and five boys there. Jacob added to his land holding. This farm, now occupied by Jacob's youngest son, Albert, and his wife, has been in the Rauscher family ever since it was bought from the railroad.

—*Mrs. John Rauscher*

Captain Patrick S. Real was born in Ireland on April 23, 1835, and came to America in 1851. He enlisted in the first call, in 1861, in Company E, 7th Regiment, Missouri Volunteer Infantry. Enlisting as a private, he was promoted to sergeant, lieutenant, and captain. He participated in 25 general battles, was wounded at Atlanta, Georgia, and Mission Ridge, Tennessee, and was mustered out at Atlanta in 1864. Although Patrick fought under the Stars and Stripes, his brother James joined the Southern army and was killed in the battle of Shiloh while Patrick was fighting in the same battle on the other side.

Patrick married Ellen Purcel, a native of Ireland, at Henry, Illinois, in 1865. They had nine children: Mary Ellen, Thomas, Emmett F., Winfred, William, Patrick, Philip, James, and Agnes. He came to West Blue precinct in 1872, locating on a soldiers' homestead in Sec. 20, T8, R4W. He later acquired a considerable amount of real estate in Grafton precinct, where he established his residence and built, on a hill overlooking the town of Grafton, a large home which was a community landmark for many years.

Patrick Real, initially a farmer and stock-raiser, built and kept the first store and the first lumber yard in Grafton. He also built the first elevator, bought the first grain, and built and kept the first hotel. He donated land for both the present cemetery and the Catholic church building. He reserved 65 grave plots for his family—visualizing, no doubt, that his children would remain in the area, raise large families, and be buried there. However, only four members of the Real family are interred there: Captain Real, who died on May 23, 1893, his wife Ellen, his son William, and an infant grandson. —*Mrs. James Real*

"**T. S. Russel**, of the firm of Culver & Russel, owns a choice 150-acre farm on School Creek, 5 miles NW of town. It is improved with a fair house, orchard, and grove, has a good belt of native timber, and is devoted to mixed farming. Mr. Russel owns a good number of town lots and a pleasant home in Grafton, hails from Indiana, came here a dozen years ago, likes the country, and is a thrifty, enterprising, and successful businessman." —*Fillmore County Hand-Book* (1884)

Caspar Salmen came to America from Canton Glarus, Switzerland, in 1849, when he was 14 years old. He settled in New York and worked for a number of years as a delivery boy for a merchant, delivering goods from Brooklyn to New York City. While he was later living in Rochester, New York, he married Mary Krepts. They moved to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and later to Green County, near Monticello. Eight children were born to them while they were in New York and Wisconsin: Henry, William, John, Caspar, Rudolph, Anna, Fred, and Emma.

Mr. Salmen was a cabinet maker by trade and also did upholstering. He opened the first furniture store in Milwaukee. During the Civil War, he worked in Tennessee building artillery wagons for the Union Army and making soldiers' coffins.



The Caspar Salmen family in 1890. *Left to right:* Rudolph, Caspar, Mr. Salmen, Fred, Mrs. Salmen, Charles, Emma. The three smaller children are George, Chrissie, and Frank.

Photo from Lee Parsons

He came to Fillmore County in the fall of 1875. The trip to Nebraska was made by covered wagon with his wife and seven children, the eldest son, Henry, having gone to Hornell, New York, to live with an aunt.

Among the family possessions which they were able to bring to Nebraska was a walking plow which was tied on the outside of the wagon. The interior was crowded, so the three older boys took turns walking. They always managed to stop near a farmstead at night, where they purchased food supplies and the boys slept in haylofts.

They spent their first year in Fillmore County in half of the four-room house of the John Linder family, who had come here earlier from Wisconsin. The covered wagon and a granary were used for sleeping quarters until a two-room dugout was completed on a farm near by. Mr. Salmen contracted to buy this land from the B. & M. Railroad and in 1883 acquired a deed to the NW $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 9 in Grafton township.

Besides the dugout, a windlass well was made and other improvements added. A frame house, still standing on the farm, replaced the dugout several years later.

At first, the farm work was done with a yoke of oxen and the team of horses which pulled the covered wagon. Indians were frequent visitors. While they were about, the younger children were kept in hiding, since, although they were friendly, they were not entirely trusted. Buffalo were a common sight in the valley which the dugout overlooked.

Within a year after the family arrived in Nebraska, the mother died following the birth of a son, Charles. Mr. Salmen shouldered the entire responsibility of caring for his family, which included several very small children, for seven years. During this time there was an outbreak of smallpox. He vaccinated all the children by first inoculating himself with a fluid from the pox of a neighbor. When that worked, he successfully vaccinated the family by scratching their arms enough to draw blood and then applying fluid from his own arm.

In 1883, he married Margaret Foltz. They had seven children: George, Chrissie, Frank, Elsie, Ernest, Ray, and Eva. They continued to live in the first frame house, to which more rooms had been added, until Mr. Salmen's death in October, 1901. After Mrs. Salmen retired to Sutton, different sons lived on the farm until 1946, when it was sold to Harold Griess.

Caspar Salmen had increased his land holdings and owned the SW $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 4 and the NW $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 16. This latter quarter-section is still in the family and is farmed by a grandson, Wesley Salmen.

—Mabel Kleinschmidt

Frederick Schaldecker came to the United States from Wittenberg, Germany, in 1869. In 1871, when he was 26, he came to Grafton township, where he made himself a dugout on the south fork of School Creek, and lived there for some time. Later he returned to Illinois where he met Sara Gustafson, whom he married in 1874. Sara had been born in Jonkoping, Sweden, June 21, 1846.



Photo from Fred Schaldecker

The Frederick Schaldecker family about 1882. *Left to right:* Frederick Schaldecker, Emma, Mrs. Schaldecker, and Jacob.

The couple came to Nebraska by team and wagon. When they arrived, they traded their team and wagon for two cows. In 1874, they homesteaded on the S $\frac{1}{2}$ of the SW $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 2. The south half of their 160 acres was a land grant from the government provided by an act of Congress; the papers, signed by President U. S. Grant, are dated 1874. The north 80 was acquired by homestead entry in 1880, with papers signed by President Rutherford B. Hayes. Their son Jacob was born in a sod house in 1876 and their daughter Emma in a frame house in 1881. Emma Schaldecker married Maurice Strater.

Frederick Schaldecker lived on his farm until 1909, when he and his wife Sara moved to Lushton, Nebraska. Their son Jacob married Margaret Tobiassen on January 18, 1905, and they farmed the place until 1939, when Jacob passed away. The seven children of Jacob and Margaret Schaldecker were born on this farm. They were Fred, Edward, Arthur, Carl, Twilla, Sarann Bernice, and Jacob.

Mrs. Jacob Schaldecker, Sr., remained on the farm until 1946, when she and her son Fred moved to Geneva. Jacob's son Carl Schaldecker still resides on the farm.

—Fred Schaldecker

John Schumacher emigrated from Germany in 1868 when he was 18 years old. He settled in Canton, Ohio, where he remained for 10 years and then came to Grafton in 1878. Here he bought the SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 23, paying the railroad \$8 per acre.

In 1880, he married Mary Zacharius of the Sutton community. They erected a frame house on their land and made this their home for many years. They had eight children: William, Walter, Gertrude, George, Clara, Arthur, Homer, and John.

Mr. Schumacher later, in 1900, bought other land near by, and about 1908 built a new house on the NE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 26, which was their home until his death in 1910. Mrs. Schumacher and her daughter Clara moved to Lincoln in 1913.

—Mrs. Charles Linder



Photo from Art Schumacher
The John Schumacher family in 1903. Back row, left to right: Clara (Johnson), William, Walter, Arthur. Front row: George, John, John G., Homer, Mary, Gertrude.

“Adjoining Mr. Dixon’s place is **J. A. Schwartz’s** 320-acre farm, embracing 170 acres of river bottom, 50 acres of native timber, half a mile of river front, secure yards, ample cribs and stabling, a comfortable cottage, and thrifty domestic groves and hedges. Mr. Schwartz grows about 7,000 bushels of corn, from 400 to 800 bushels of wheat, 900 bushels of oats and 600 of rye, keeps a few cattle and some good teams, annually turns off 120 model Poland pigs ranging from 250 to 600 lbs. weight and recently sold a carload averaging 400 lbs. He is one of the best swine feeders in the Blue Valley, has a splendid estate, is a live, go-ahead, ambitious young Canadian who came here from Illinois in ’78, with two teams and \$500 and has now personal and real property which could not be purchased for \$10,000.”

—*Fillmore County Hand-Book* (1884)

Mrs. William Schwartz says that Joe Schwartz was her husband’s uncle; that his father came in 1883, and while waiting for their own home to be vacated they lived in a log cabin, the only building left in Fillmore City, which was formerly the hotel. Besides this there used to be two stores and a blacksmith shop, also a post office kept in a store.

John Seitz was born in Wunsiedel, Bavaria, Germany, on February 10, 1830. When he was 22 years old, he emigrated to America and landed in New York, where he worked for 12 years. On April 14, 1864, he entered the Civil War as a sailor in the navy and served one year as a cook on the battleship *Gettysburg*. He was honorably discharged at Portsmouth, Virginia, on April 14, 1865. He then went to Sterling, Illinois, where he worked in the copper trade.

On November 22, 1873, he married Wilhelmina Kleinschmidt. In 1878, with their two children, Fred Henry and Kathryn Fredricka, they moved to Fillmore County. He bought the SW $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 9, T8, R4W in Grafton township, paying the railroad \$7 an acre for the land, which was all prairie at that time. Four more children—Hermina, John, Jr., Sarah, and William—were born to them here. William died at the age of $3\frac{1}{2}$ years of scarlet fever.

John Seitz broke up the sod, farmed, and worked long hours, seeing all the hardships and joys of pioneer life. He improved his home little by little until it was one of comfort and convenience, having an 11-room house and large and numerous outbuildings. He planted many trees, including apple, cherry, and pear, and also a mulberry hedge of which many of the trees are still alive. As the fruit trees died out, some of them were replaced by the eldest son, Fred, who also planted large strawberry beds and other garden crops. Many of the people of this vicinity yearly bought supplies of tomatoes, rhubarb, strawberries, and other products from this farm. The Seitzes also produced much honey. This was a thrifty place, and scarcely any piece of ground was without its crop of some kind.



Photo from Emma Seitz
The John Seitz family in 1893. Back row, left to right: Fred, Kate, Minnie; middle row: John, Sr., John, Jr., Mrs. John Seitz, Sr.; front row: Nellie, Emma.

Mrs. Seitz always had a good garden and many flowers, which were her delight. The Seitzes retired from the harder farm work in 1904 when John, Jr., rented the farm, together with land of the Shroyer estate. At this time Mrs. Seitz remarked that they were retired but not tired farmers. The place was rich in alfalfa and prairie hay and always had good pasture. It was a good home for the family, where they raised a great deal of poultry but not many cattle or hogs.

John Seitz, Sr., passed away on October 30, 1922, and Mrs. Seitz on May 26, 1935. Their daughter Emma still resides on the farm and is the only surviving member of the family.

—*Emma Seitz*

Henry Serr, an immigrant from Russia, purchased his farm, located on the SW $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 16, from the Kansas City & Omaha R.R. on November 4, 1884. His son Jacob took over the operation of this farm in 1891 and resided there until his retirement in 1929. Jacob married Christina Peter, and they had five children: Nora, Rudolph, Theodore, Calvin, and Gertrude. Jacob got possession of the farm in 1898, and his son Calvin in turn became the owner in 1951. At present, Henry’s great-grandson, Raymond Serr, is residing on and operating this farm.

—*Calvin Serr*

John Shoff, Grafton’s first postmaster, was born in Guernsey County, Ohio, on October 27, 1840, and lived there until 1852, when he moved to Fulton County, Illinois. In 1860, he moved to Sigourney, Iowa, where he farmed until he came to Nebraska. He enlisted in Sigourney on August 14, 1862, in Company H, 33rd Regiment, Iowa Volunteer Infantry. He participated in seven general engagements, was wounded at Jenkins’ Ferry, and was discharged for disability on June 25, 1865.

He was married in Mount Pleasant, Iowa, in 1866 to Martha Taylor of Coshocton County, Ohio. They had six children: Serrepta A., William, Jesse, Hattie, Charles, and Martha.

He first located in West Blue precinct in the fall of 1870, homesteading on Sec. 30 west, and held the office of justice of the peace for a number of years. Later he moved to the



Home of Henry Serr—on E ½, NW ¼, Sec. 21, Grafton township, (Mrs. John Fueher), Julia, John Fueher (son-in-law), Maggie, Henry

Photo from Mrs. Julie Ulmer on land the Serrs purchased from the railroad. Left to right: Christina Serr, Jacob, Mrs. Henry Serr, Rose, Catherine. Note sod house at extreme left in background.

village of Grafton. He was appointed postmaster in 1873 and held this post for 15 months. He was reappointed in the fall of 1878 and held the office over a long period. His son Charles also served as postmaster at a later date. John was also a dealer in clocks and sewing machines.

Mr. Shoff lived to the age of 94 years. He passed away at his home in Grafton in 1934 and is buried in the Grafton Cemetery.

Mrs. Anna K. Shroyer, with her husband and family of six children, left Grafton, West Virginia, to seek a new home in the West. They settled first in Schuyler County, Missouri, where some of their relatives were located. While they were in Missouri, her husband died, and in the next year (1869) she and her children—David, Jacob, Andrew, Mary, John, and Elvina—came on to Nebraska. They homesteaded on the S ½ of the NW ¼ of Sec. 10, Grafton township. At first they lived in a dugout near School Creek. After

a well was dug on higher ground, they built a sod house near the well. Here they lived until a frame house was built years later. As time passed, more rooms were added. From the time they came in 1869 until the railroad came through in 1871 they drove, with team and wagon, to Lincoln for food and supplies.

The Shroyers applied for a timber claim on the N ½ of the NW ¼ of Sec. 10. This claim was granted at Lincoln on January 20, 1885, and was recorded in Fillmore County on May 3, 1886, as Timber Claim 106 in Nebraska. The papers were signed by President Chester A. Arthur. The Shroyers later bought adjoining lands. Their chief occupations were farming, stock raising, and buying and shipping stock.

Mary Shroyer taught school in District 29 during the terms of 1881-82 and 1882-83 and in District 66 in 1884. She and her husband moved to California in the 1890's, and in 1913 Mrs. Anna K. Shroyer, her son John, and her daughter Elvina also moved there. Anna Shroyer passed away in 1916 at Pomona, California.

Jacob T. Shroyer remained on the farm until his death in 1921. Andrew G. Shroyer purchased the SE ¼ of Sec. 3 on June 28, 1886, from the C. B. & Q. R.R. He lived there until he retired in 1919, after which his son William continued to live on the farm.

It is said that Grafton was named for Grafton, West Virginia, the town from which the Shroyers originally came.

—Mrs. William Shroyer

Joseph Tatro was born in Burlington, Vermont, on May 5, 1824. He moved to Monroe, Michigan, in 1833 and lived there until 1847, when he moved to Winnebago County, Wisconsin, and farmed there until he came to Nebraska in 1871.

He was married in 1858 to Phoebe Josslyn of Rhode Island. They had five children: Jonathan, Lewis, Lorenzo, Parriazade, and Alfred. He enlisted in 1863 in Company G, 36th Regiment, Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry. He participated in 15 general engagements, was twice wounded, and was mustered out at Annapolis, Maryland, in June, 1865.

In 1871, he homesteaded on Sec. 26 of Grafton township. Later he acquired the eastern part of Sec. 25, where he assisted in laying out the town site of Grafton, donating a share of lots to the town company. He erected the first frame house in Grafton, after the railroad section house, in 1871, and engaged in the furniture and undertaking business.

After the death of his wife Phoebe, he married, in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, Maria Oryall of Clinton County, New York. He died in 1885 and was buried in the Grafton Cemetery.



Photo from Grace Shroyer

Four-generation picture of Anna Shroyer family: Vina Parker and son, Mary Shroyer Miller, Anna K. Shroyer.

The following account was written by Eva Waggoner Todd in 1966, at the age of 89:

Charles Willard Waggoner, with his wife and three children—Delos, 7, Eva, 2, and George, 5 months—came to Grafton, Nebraska, on March 10, 1879, a bleak cold day, he called it.



Photo from Mrs. Eva Todd
Mr. and Mrs. Charles W. Waggoner in 1895

My father, threatened with tuberculosis, was advised by his doctor to seek a dry climate, so he sold a good farm in Illinois and bought 320 acres 2½ miles NW of Grafton from a Mr. Wright. Later he added an 80 to this. Mother, used to the woods, streams, and fruit of Ohio, missed them greatly, but they had found the dry climate and Father lost his cough entirely in the outdoor life.

A native of New York State, he thought we must have a fruit orchard, and set out apple, peach, pear, cherry, and plum trees. Not many survived the hot, arid summers. He put out, also, a grove of black walnut trees for shade as well as future fence posts for the big pastures. These trees, too, failed to live long. One big success was a meadow of white clover near his dozen beehives. The honey was plentiful and very delicious. My father worked among those bees with bare hands and face, and never a sting. Watching him, I've had my eyes swollen shut and my hands aching from stings of those unfriendly insects. Mother said a bee would fly a mile just to sting her, so she never ventured near the hives. A stream called the Elk Run, which carried very little water except after heavy rains, meandered through the large pasture, and my sister and I loved to follow it, looking for the wild prairie flowers.

Father was a respected member of the community—men said "His word is as good as his bond." Mother was active in many ways. A serious sickness brought a call for her; we had no R.N.'s in those days, and many a life she saved through her good common sense and her willingness to serve. She helped slow pupils to learn.

She formed a club of young farm girls who met once a week at our home, where mother helped them with different forms of sewing and handicraft, and supervised the serving of refreshments.

She was a most ardent worker in the W.C.T.U., for Nebraska was very wet, and the results of intemperance were pathetic, sometimes tragic. Four of the brightest men of our town were victims of the "social drink": the banker, the newspaper editor, the pleasant lumber man, and our beloved family doctor. Paresis, insanity, delirium tremens, and suicide. I was forever impressed with the Biblical warning, "Wine is a mocker; whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise, for at the last it biteth like a serpent." I remember that the Catholic priest, Father Murphy, worked with the Union, for he had some weak brethren in his church and he was a real father to his parish.

Father and Mother had both been teachers in Illinois, and one winter the school board of the Allen district—Mr.

Allen, Mr. Stanord, and Mr. Watt—came to ask mother to take their school the rest of the year. It seemed that a young woman had been frightened away by the misconduct of the big boys, young huskies who came in when corn-picking was finished. Mother said, Yes, if she might take me and my sister, three and four years old. She welcomed these hoodlums and set them to work at higher arithmetic, civil government, current events, and bookkeeping, and got them so interested they wouldn't miss a day, even worked through the noon hour. When the term ended, they presented her with a handsome chair. The pleased school board coaxed her to teach a second year. Then she was persuaded to go to town as assistant principal for two or three years. Her pupils always spoke of her with admiration.

When Father retired from the farm, and I graduated from high school with a scholarship, it seemed natural that, when our Congregational minister, who was a Doane College man, suggested to us that a move to Crete would be fine for me and my sister to attend college, our parents decided to do so. This was in 1895. My brother Delos had already moved to Colorado.

George H. Warren was born in Concord, Massachusetts, and lived there until 1866. Coming west, he lived for a time in Hinsdale, Illinois, and Kearney, Nebraska, before settling in Grafton. In the fall of 1880, he began business as a dealer in grain, coal, and lumber. The elevator he erected then was enlarged in 1881 to a capacity of 20,000 bushels. It measured 48' x 20', was 25' high, with a driveway 12' wide, and cost \$4,000 to build.



Photo from Ralph Schnize
A group of hunters at the Zimbleman farm after a coyote hunt (1912).

